

SAF/LLZ (Legislative Research Team)

BILIRAKIS, Michael (Republican)  
Representative, 9th District, Florida  
Elected 1982 to 98th Congress  
Reelected to succeeding Congresses



### BACKGROUND

Born: Tarpon Springs, Florida - 16 July 1930

Home: Palm Harbor, Florida

Marital Status: Married (Evelyn) - 2 children

Religion: Greek Orthodox

Education: Univ of Pittsburgh, BS, 1959; G Washington Univ, 1959-60; Univ of Florida, JD, 1963

Military: US Air Force, 1951-55; staff sergeant

Profession: Lawyer; restaurateur; engineer

Political: No previous office. Switched parties in 1970. Elected in 1982 to the then new 9th District. Unopposed in 1998 general election. Reelected in 2000 with 82% of the vote.

Rep Bilirakis, described as a conservative, nonetheless has maintained a moderate record.

In the 106th Congress, sponsored language related to the payment of special compensation to certain severely disabled military retirees. Also sponsored or cosponsored measures to provide survivor benefits to the spouses of former POW's, tax credits to employers who have Reservists or Guardsmen recalled to active duty, continued commitment to NATO, and a measure opposing the introduction of US ground forces in Kosovo. Expressed support for a bill providing a cost-of-living adjustment to veterans with service-connected disabilities and enhancing programs providing compensation and life insurance benefits for veterans. Opposed permanent normal trading relations status for China. Sent a ltr to the President signed by 28 colleagues urging him to deny an export license to Turkey for the purchase of 145 attack helicopters which they plan to purchase from a US manufacturer. Recognized the 352nd Fighter Group, a special group of World War II veterans known as the Blue Nose Bastards of Bosney who flew P-51 Mustangs. Cosponsored H.R. 5642, to require states to accept all military absentee ballots unless fraud is demonstrated.

In the 107th Congress, during consideration of legislation to honor the 21 members of the Virginia Air National Guard and the Florida Army National Guard who were killed in an aircraft crash on March 3, 2001, in south-Central Georgia, noted that one of the aircraft's pilots was from his district. Expressed support for H.R. 801, H.R. 811, H.R. 2540, and H.R. 4085, making various improvements to veterans benefits programs. Announced that his proposal to expand special compensation for severely disabled military retirees was included in the FY 2001 DoD Auth Act, which was passed by the House. Intro H.R. 303, to eliminate the offset imposed on disabled military retirees. Remarkd "Nationwide, more than 400,000 disabled military retirees must give up their retired pay in order to receive their VA compensation. Military retirees are the only group of federal employees who are forced to fund their own disability benefits." Bill had over 300 cosponsors by April 2001. (DoD appeals an identical Senate provision in the DoD Auth because it would allow retirees to receive multiple payments.) During debate on the budget resolution, discussed his efforts to eliminate the current offset between military retired pay and VA disability (CR, 20 Mar02). Expressed support for the FY02 DoD Auth conference report (CR, 12Dec01).

Additional: Member of Air Force Caucus; Congressional Human Rights Caucus

AF Bases: None.

COMMITTEES  
ENERGY AND COMMERCE  
VETERAN'S AFFAIRS